



Comprehensive Trail Plan Organizational Meeting

Meeting Notes

Meeting Date:	Tuesday, February 28, 2017, 6:00pm-8:00pm Rudyard Township Hall, 18725 S. Mackinac Trail, Rudyard, MI 49870
Meeting Purpose:	To develop a Trail Working Group (TWG) to connect representatives from each trail activity group with forest employees to evaluate the existing trails system and collectively identify opportunities to improve the trail user experience across the forest. The expected outcome is one primary representative (and one alternate) for each trail activity group to solicit input from their trail activity community.
Participants:	
Forest Service	Robert West, Loren Everest, Paul Holeva, Nancy Roseman, Kari Vanderheuel, Julia Hall
MDNR	Paul Gaberdiel, EUP Trails Specialist, gaberdielp@michigan.gov
Newspaper	Stephen King, writer-columnist, 906-762-4760
Trail Users	See attached spreadsheet for attendees and contact information

Discussion Notes

Welcome address - Robert West, St. Ignace District Ranger.

Talked briefly about the 2006 Forest plan and the Transportation Analysis Plan (TAP) that was completed in 2015. Introduced Paul Holeva, Recreation and Lands Program manager

Forest Objective: Comprehensive Trails Analysis – presented by Paul Holeva, Recreation and Lands Program Manager

Meeting Objectives

- Introduce Comprehensive Trails Analysis
- Discuss the Roles and Responsibilities of the Trails Working Group (TWG)
- Identify User Group Representatives

Why Manage Trail Systems:

- Public Safety
- Environmental Conservation
- Quality of User Experience
- Resource Limitations



Historic Trail Markers

- 2005 Travel Management Rule – minimum required road system to administer the Forest Transportation system.
- Motor Vehicle Use Map – Inadequate, more connectivity, loops/routes
- 2013 – Travel Analysis Process (TAP)
- 2015 – Motorized Routes Proposals
- 2016 – New Forest Supervisor – engage all user groups for broad public support

Comprehensive Trails Analysis

- Review current Forest Trails System
- Assess user satisfaction
- Propose adjustments
 - Strategic development
 - Connectors, signs, etc.
 - Close underutilized trails

Trails Working Group (TWG)

- Separate TWG's for each Forest Zone
- 10 Member Team
 - 9 User Group Representatives
 - 1 Forest Service Coordinator
- Primary Objectives
 - Coordinate Public Input
 - Develop Collaborative Solutions

Trail User Groups

- Over Snow Vehicle
- ATV/ORV
- Motorcycle
- Biking/Snow Biking
- Hiking
- Cross Country Skiing/Snow Shoeing
- Equestrian
- Water Trails
- Mushers

Member Responsibilities – Representatives (or alternates) are expected to:

- Attend and participate in all TWG Meetings
 - Meetings should occur at least every 2 months
- Coordinate with forest user communities for input
 - Name and Point of Contact will be provided to local organizations and posted on the Forest Service website for public comment
 - Coordinate TWG activities/proposals with counterpart on the other zone

TWG Sideboards and Expectations

- TWG is not a decision making authority.
 - Proposals will be used to guide future investments based on forest needs and available resources
- Balance is Key
 - Plan must accommodate all user groups
 - New developments may require closures
 - Partnership is essential



**Forest
Service**

Hiawatha National Forest
820 Rains Drive, Gladstone, MI 49837
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Proposed Timeline

- April 2017 – TWG Kick-off Meetings
- Summer/Fall 2017 – Zone TWG Meetings
- December 2017 – Final TWG Meeting
 - Presentation of Comprehensive Trails Plan

Questions & Answer Period – the majority of the questions were concerned with road closures and whether or not closed roads could be available for other uses. Forest service staff briefly discussed funding shortfalls and the Transportation Analysis Process (TAP) that was aimed at identifying the minimum transportation system required to support our mission. Though we have to go through the NEPA process there is some opportunity to convert roads to trails. Collaboration will be essential to maintain our trails. Forest service staff also pointed out that nothing is closed to hiking and equestrian users are easier on the landscape than ATV's. One member of the public suggested that having graded equestrian trails for expert, intermediate and beginner riders might help reduce the cost to develop and maintain equestrian trails.

Breakout Sessions - attendees organized by use group, network and finalized representatives

Meeting Recap

- TWG Member List, Document and Updates will be posted at the following location:
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/hiawatha/workingtogether>.
- The East Zone Forest Service Coordinator
Kari Vanderheuel, (906) 643-7900 x 112

Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 pm

List of Handouts

- Agenda
- Trail Working Group (TWG) Guidelines
- Draft Purpose and Need

Action Items

- The East Zone Forest Service Coordinator will work with representatives to schedule the kick-off meeting in April
- Representatives should review and comment on the draft Purpose and Need prior to the April meeting
- Representatives can obtain a map from the Forest Service and should begin working on draft proposals prior to the April meeting



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